

Regarding request to establish a Central University with Santhali as the medium of instruction in the Jangalmahal region of West Bengal

SHRI KALIPADA SAREN KHERWAL (JHARGRAM): Sir, according to the last Census, over 70 lakh people in India speak Santhali, making the Santhal community the third-largest tribal group in the country. The community is predominantly concentrated across seven States, including West Bengal.

To protect the rich linguistic and cultural heritage of the community and to expand access to higher education, it is essential to establish a Central University with Santhali as a primary medium of learning and research. Such an initiative would uphold Constitutional principles of equality, cultural preservation, and the safeguarding of minority languages. Establishing a Central University in West Bengal would significantly benefit the Santhali-speaking population, given the community's dense concentration in the State. It would promote and develop Santhali language and literature, create opportunities for higher studies for youth in their own language, encourage research on Santhali culture and history, and support the socio-economic upliftment of the community. This step would not only honour the legacy of the Santhal community but also reinforce India's commitment to celebrating its linguistic and cultural diversity.

Therefore, I respectfully urge the Union Government to establish a Central University with Santhali as the medium of instruction in the Jangalmahal region of West Bengal.